TYPES OF NON PROBABILITY SAMPLING

Course-M.A.EDUCATION

Semester 4th

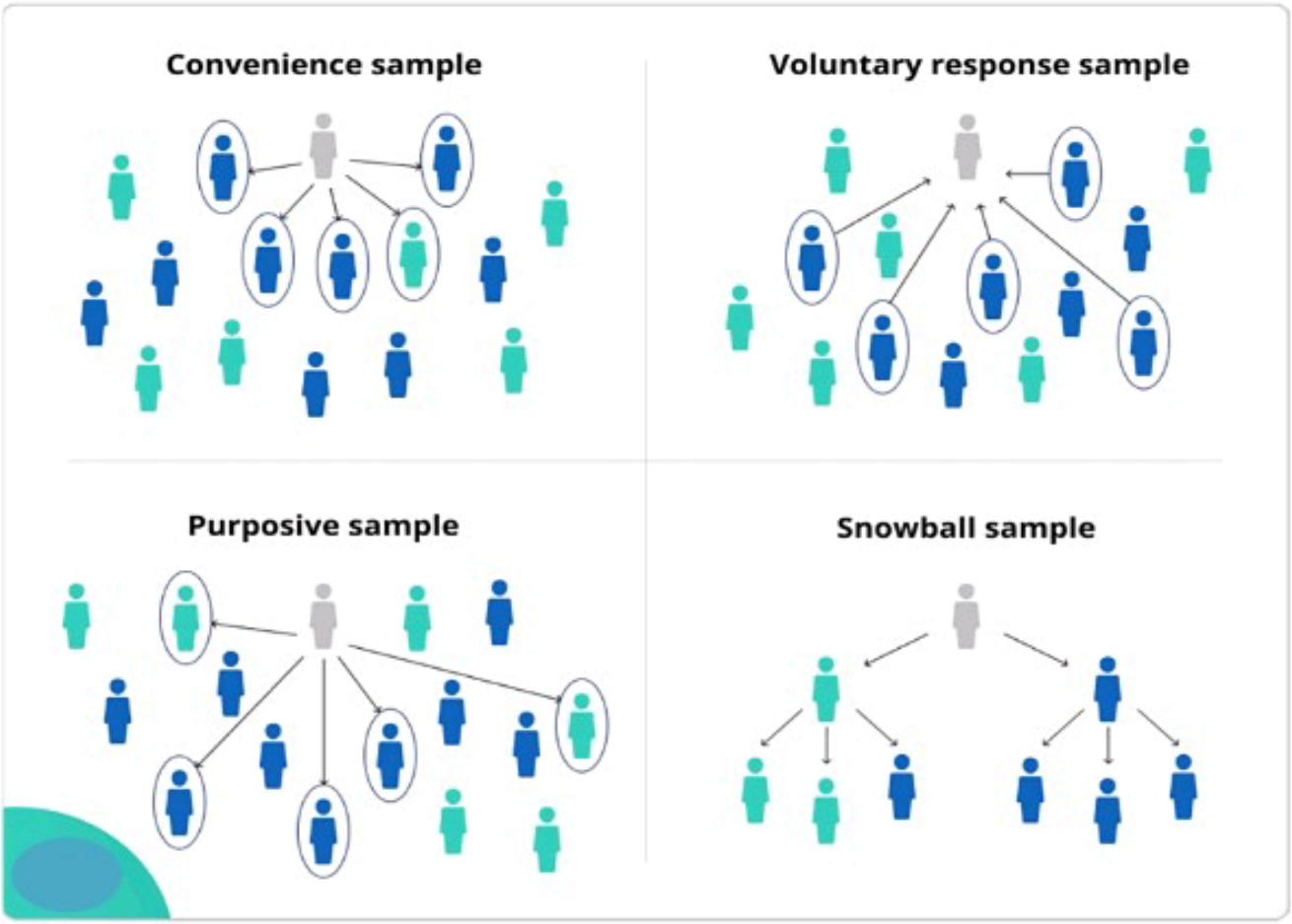
Paper 401

NON-PROBABILITY SAMPLING METHODS

In a non-probability sample, individuals are selected based on non-random criteria, and not every individual has a chance of being included. This type of sample is easier and cheaper to access, but you can't use it to make valid statistical inferences about the whole population.

Non-probability sampling techniques are often appropriate for exploratory and qualitative research. In these types of research,

the aim is not to test a hypothesis about a broad population, but to develop an initial understanding of a small or under-researched population.



1. CONVENIENCE SAMPLING

A convenience sample simply includes the individuals who happen to be most accessible to the researcher.

This is an easy and inexpensive way to gather initial data, but there is no way to tell if the sample is representative of the population, so it can't produce generalizable results.

Example

You are researching opinions about student support services in your university, so after each of your classes, you ask your fellow students to complete a survey on the topic. This is a convenient way to gather data, but as you only surveyed students taking the same classes as you at the same level, the sample is not representative of all the students at your university.

2. VOLUNTARY RESPONSE SAMPLING

Similar to a convenience sample, a voluntary response sample is mainly based on ease of access. Instead of the researcher choosing participants and directly contacting them, people volunteer themselves (e.g. by responding to a public online survey).

Voluntary response samples are always at least somewhat biased, as some people will inherently be more likely to volunteer than others.

Example

You send out the survey to all students at your university and a lot of students decide to complete it. This can certainly give you some insight into the topic, but the people who responded are more likely to be those who have strong opinions about the student support services, so you can't be sure that their opinions are representative of all students.

3. PURPOSIVE SAMPLING

This type of sampling involves the researcher using their judgement to select a sample that is most useful to the purposes of the research.

It is often used in qualitative research, where the researcher wants to gain detailed knowledge about a specific phenomenon rather than make statistical inferences. An effective purposive sample must have clear criteria and rationale for inclusion.

Example

You want to know more about the opinions and experiences of disabled students at your university, so you purposefully select a number of students with different support needs in order to gather a varied range of data on their experiences with student services.

4. SNOWBALL SAMPLING

If the population is hard to access, snowball sampling can be used to recruit participants via other participants. The number of people you have access to "snowballs" as you get in contact with more people.

Example

You are researching experiences of homelessness in your city. Since there is no list of all homeless people in the city, probability sampling isn't possible. You meet one person who agrees to participate in the research, and she puts you in contact with other homeless people that she knows in the area.